



## At the bus stop



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### Chapter 1 by Joakim

Tom had always been so sick at waiting for the bus to arrive. He had been doing it for the last two years now since they moved here from the city. It was a almost an hour bikeride and since it was his only possibility to get to school he would always arrive too early and the buss too late. This day was different though since he wasn't alone at the stop for the first time in those two years...

### Chapter 2 by Roggen Wulf



Tom glanced at her out of the corner of his eye, trying not to be conspicuous though it was difficult not to stare. Her tongue darted out of her mouth and touched her lower lip nervously as she scanned the traffic, paying him little attention. She was seated only a little way away, but she did not seem to have noticed him when she sat down, or else she was doing a very dedicated job of pretending not to see him.

She leaned forward a bit, her hands gripping the front edge of the metal bench on which they both sat. It was a grey morning, and what little sunlight shown through the low, heavy clouds brought out the little blue flecks in her slate-coloured eyes, which darted back and forth

watchfully. He cleared his throat and looked away. She glanced at him briefly, then did the same, stiffening a bit and exhaling.

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Her lips were a thin line, and for a moment he thought she might not reply. "Wearing what?" she asked finally.

"All of that...." he said, indicating her armor.

She looked at her armor, then at him, then away. "I can't tell you that." she said after a moment of hesitation.

"Oh." said Tom quietly.

They both remained silent. She glanced at him, then took a deep breath. "I'm undercover." she offered stiffly.

"Undercover?" Tom furrowed his brow.

She nodded, and he waited for her to elaborate, but nothing more seemed forthcoming.

"Are you a cosplayer?" he asked.

Her eyes fell on him slowly. "No." she said defensively. "My armor is real. I need it to protect myself."

Tom blinked and tilted his head. "To protect yourself? ...from what?"

She looked away and replied quietly, "Things. I just need it, okay?"

"O-okay," Tom nodded uncertainly. "I, umm, I haven't seen you at school before." he commented.

"It's my first day," she said.

"Oh," said Tom.

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"My first day undercover."

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Undercover here. I've been undercover before. Lots. But I can't talk about that. It's classified.

Tom nodded again, despite having even less idea what was going on than he did before. "I'm not sure if they'll let you wear that at school," he ventured.

"But I need it!" she protested.

Tom shrugged. "It's just that we have this dress code...."

She turned her face back toward the traffic and said nothing, suddenly seeming very concerned. She picked up the mottled, green and gray cammo-patterned helmet at her side and held it in her lap as if someone were going to try to take it from her. She reminded him of something from a video game, like a Spartan or a Titan pilot. Those were just games, though, and here she was at the very real bus stop with him on a very real school day, waiting for the bus, which was late as usual.

"What classes are you taking?" he asked, trying to prevent the silence from growing awkward.

Her gaze fell on him once again and she seemed to be considering his question very carefully. Then, after a long and tense moment of deliberation, she set her helmet aside and pulled her backpack out from under the bench. She fished around in it for a moment, then pulled out a creased piece of paper with her class schedule printed on it. This she held out to him furtively and at arms length before pulling her hand back from him hastily once he had taken the sheet from her.

"Oh," he said after a moment. "We have this class together." He pointed to one of the classrooms on the list and she peered over at him, trying to see without getting too close. "There's an empty seat beside mine, I'll bet they'll put you there."

She took her schedule back from him and examined it. For the first time since he had opened his mouth, she looked relieved. "I think..." she began hesitantly, "I think we should be friends."

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"Good," she took a deep breath.

"I'm Tom, by the way." he said, holding out his hand to her.

She scrutinized his hand uncertainly, deciding whether or not shake it. "Nice to meet you, Tom," she said, finally taking his hand.

He looked at her and furrowed his brow, waiting for her to say more, but instead her grey eyes turned back to the traffic and she picked up her helmet again. He glanced from side to side, then cleared his throat. "So, umm... what's your name?"

### Chapter 3 by Joakim



The bus arrived at that same moment. When she stood up the armor made so much noise that she could pretend not to hear the question.

Tom swallowed when they entered the bus. She would be quite the target for the morons. Especially Chad. Fucking Chad.

Chad had picked on Tom since he moved there. It was always "so funny" and everyone thought that Tom was a pussy for not rolling with it but he hated being singled out.

When Chad saw the armor wearing girl...

### Chapter 4 by Mia



...he squealed with delight.

### Chapter 5 by meprlo



"THAT IS SUCH A CUTE OUTFIT!"

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**Chapter 6 by Bugmenot84**

hey! what is going on?!

**Chapter 7 by Roggen Wulf**

It looked remarkably as if she were pulling a gun out from under her backpack. Tom started in surprise and took hold of her wrist, giving Chad a nervous smile that he hoped would soothe the unsuspecting bully. Chad gave him a disgusted sneer.

"Hiding behind your new girlfriend, wimp?" Chad spat contemptuously.

"What are you doing?" she hissed at Tom.

"Just be cool," Tom hissed back.

"But I have encountered an enemy!" she snapped.

"An enemy?" Chad demanded. "All I said was that your outfit was cute."

"It's not an outfit and it's not cute," said the girl defensively. "It's my armor and it's necessary."

"Whatever...." Chad curled his lip. "It was just a compliment."

Tom tipped his head at the bully in confusion. Hadn't he been taunting her? Was Chad being sincere? Chad? No, it was impossible. After all, Chad was ...well, Chad.

"What? You can't take a compliment, loser?" Chad snapped.

"I am not a loser!" she protested. "I am undefeated!"

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"Calm down," Tom urged.

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"Don't tell her to calm down," Chad barked.

"Yes," she agreed. "Don't tell me to be calm when facing the enemy."

"I'm not an enemy!" Chad cried angrily.

"Then why are you shouting?!" she demanded.

"I'm shouting because you're shouting!" Chad shouted.

"One of us must stop shouting, then, and I refuse to surrender!" she responded with surprising ferocity. "I never surrender!"

Behind her, Tom was finding it increasingly difficult to prevent her from drawing what he thought looked very much like a gun. Her muscles tightened further, and Tom gritted his teeth as he struggled to hold her wrist back.

"Fine, hell...." Chad said, taking a step back. "You're a freaky."

"I am not a freak!" she yelled.

"Hey, I stopped yelling," Chad growled defensively. "Now it's your turn."

She looked Chad up and down for a moment, then relaxed her tense muscles and straightened up a bit. "So you surrender, then."

"Uh...." Chad stared at her.

Tom nodded at Chad fervently, hoping to convince him to agree with the girl, who had apparently brought weapons onto the school bus with her. Chad looked at Tom disdainfully.

"What are you even doing, creep?" Chad said.

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"His name isn't creep," she

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"This dweeb!" Chad laughed. "He's your friend! Come on, you've got to be kidding me. How are you friends with him?"

"He and I are in the same class," she replied simply.

"Okay, what class do you have with her?" Chad demanded of Tom, still laughing openly.

Tom replied meekly and Chad shook his head in ugly amusement. "Looks like the three of us have the same class, then. I guess that makes you and me friends, right?" he added sarcastically.

She seemed to ponder this for a moment, then lowered her hands and nodded. "Very well, we're friends."

Chad stared. "You're serious?"

She nodded again. "Yes. You will sit with Tom and me."

"Like hell I will!" Chad snapped.

"You like my armor," she replied. "You can't see it very well from over there. If you want to see it better, you'll have to sit with us or invite us to sit with you."

Tom looked from the new girl to Chad and back again, and to his surprise, found that Chad was actually considering this proposal. It was beyond insane. Chad, the school bully, was really thinking of sitting with the new kid, who was by far the strangest person Tom had ever met—and all because he thought that this bizarre new girl's outfit was "cute."

Realizing that the whole bus was staring at him with baited breath, Chad came to a decision. He swallowed and said....

Chapter 8 by MIA

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"If you lend me your armor, and if you sit between me and Chad, Tom, I can consider it. But only because you wear suits." "If you treat my friend with respect, yes you can."

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The whole bus seemed to hold its breath. When Chad announced he was laying down his bullying-Tom-weapons he in the same time got his hand in the girls arm gear. She leaned closer to Tom and whispered in his ear: "Don't worry. That's my gear, it's only compatible with me. I'm going to protect you from now on."

the end

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